

VISION 21 IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

Minutes – May 5, 2005

Accepted July 20, 2005

Present: Jennifer Page, Sara Oaklander, Margaret O'Brien, Paul Solomon, Diane Stafford

Absent: Victoria Haase, Matthew Hausmann, Tim Higgins, Barry Winston

1. Administrivia

- 1.1 The minutes from the meeting of April 7, 2005 were approved with corrections.
- 1.2 Barry, Victoria, Matt and Tim contacted Jennifer to say they would be unable to attend tonight's meeting.
- 1.3 The agenda for tonight's meeting was reviewed.

2. Announcements and Brief Reports

- 2.1 Tim Higgins has submitted his resignation from his position as Senior Planner. He will be taking a job in the private sector closer to home. (The implications of this were discussed later in the meeting.)
- 2.2 Waverley Square Fire Station – Roger Colton sent word that three bids were submitted in response to the RFP. The bids will be reviewed by the Board of Selectmen who will determine next steps.

3. Planning for Belmont Center

- 3.1 Paul Solomon gave an update on a proposed planning process for Belmont Center. He reflected on how Belmont's focus on planning has grown over the past few years and thanked Vision Committee members for input in planning a process. He is recommending that the Board of Selectmen appoint a five to seven person committee to design and implement a planning process that will look at all aspects of Belmont Center. Paul is concerned that the focus will be more on re-use of the fire station and light department buildings, and not enough on clarifying a shared vision for the Center and developing comprehensive plans to achieve that vision. The Board of Selectmen has supported the process that Paul is recommending. They agreed that our new Town administrator, Tom Younger, should participate as an ex-officio member. Paul underscored the anticipated value of Tom's expertise and fresh perspective. The selection of committee members is intended to be done by June 1st. Proposed names should be forwarded to Paul as soon as possible. He will also review the volunteer interest forms to see if anyone suitable has indicated interest in this sort of commitment. A brief discussion ensued regarding those forms and possible ways they could be made more useful.

4. Sustainable Belmont

- 4.1 Jennifer reported that Sustainable Belmont is meeting monthly on the first Wednesday of the month. This month, Tim McCarthy presented an update on energy credits.
- 4.2 The Committee discussed the importance of promoting Sustainable Belmont throughout the community. One idea is to encourage Co-Chairs Jan Kruse and Heather Tuttle to submit an article to the local paper to introduce the group and how it emerged from the Environmental Fair. Another idea is to acknowledge the leadership of Jan and Heather as their initiative and role as champions were instrumental in the formation of Sustainable Belmont.
- 4.3 The Committee also discussed the importance of publicizing the many environmentally sustainable efforts that are already underway within Town government, including two buildings that have included green design, the ESCO project, the Light Department's work with energy credits, and the biodegradable material used during winter storms by the Highway Department. We agreed that we'd like to see the Town and our Town employees receive some credit for these efforts.
- 4.4 Jennifer distributed a revised version of Sustainable Belmont's mandate. The Committee voted its approval of the changes. Jennifer will ask Jan and Heather to review it one more time before it is finalized. Currently, Jennifer is serving as the VIC's liaison to the group, which has made sense during the group's start-up phase. Before long, it may be appropriate to name a different member of the VIC as the group's liaison.

5. Town Day

- 5.1 Sue Pizzi of Lawndale Realty is donating their space to us for use on Town Day. We are grateful.
- 5.2 Sustainable Belmont and the Neighbor's Network will share our table. Sustainable Belmont has volunteers for some part of the day; Jennifer will ask the same of the Neighbor's Network.
- 5.3 Sara agreed to coordinate the VIC's table. A schedule of staffing was discussed. Jennifer will contact members not present tonight and advise Sara of their availability so she can finalize a schedule.
- 5.4 Equipment, materials, etc. – Sara will lend a table, tablecloth and two lawn chairs; other members will help transport it to and from the fair. Paul will bring another lawn chair. Jennifer will pursue having a banner made. We agreed that, rather than publicizing the Committee, the focus should be on the vision itself. General agreement was reached that the layout on the banner should have VISION 21 in big lettering with "A Working Vision for Belmont's Future" underneath. Jennifer will also ask Victoria about supplying a tent for the table; she will let our two subgroups know that they should provide their own signage and handouts. Materials to be distributed will include the vision statement, the newcomer's booklets, and a one page summary of our work to date. We will also have town volunteer interest surveys available for anyone who might like to express interest in assisting the VIC.
- 5.5 The Human Rights Commission has asked if they might share our Town Day table. After careful consideration, we agreed that since we are already sharing the table with our own

two subgroups, the most we can do is distribute their brochures. Jennifer will report this back to the Commission.

6. Looking ahead

- 6.1 The Committee discussed the status of our membership. We are an eleven person committee and currently two seats are open (formerly held by Joe Green and Bill Hofmann). One of those is meant to be a representative from the Warrant Committee, but given that Committee's obligations this is not realistic. Jennifer will submit a written request to the Board of Selectmen to make this change, and she will be exploring potential candidates for membership. Sara encouraged Jennifer to review past meeting notes to see what ideas we have had in the past about potential new members. Tim's resignation will also prompt a change in membership as he is currently our staff liaison. Our representative from the School Committee may also change. Given her conflicting work schedule, Diane Stafford may have to pass the role on to someone else. However, she is somewhat reluctant to do so and so inquired about the possibility of sharing the position with another School Committee member. The Committee's sense is that this would not be ideal for us due to the lack of continuity in involvement in our issues and activities; however, having one member serve as the regular representative and another fill in on occasion might work. Diane will discuss this further with Ann Rittenburg from the School Committee, who has expressed an interest in serving on the VIC. If the change is to happen, it might make sense to time it to coincide with the introduction of other new members.
- 6.2 In the short-term, the VIC is likely to need to attend to two things as we wait for new members to join us. The first is the Neighbor's Network which has additional priorities to pursue but not enough people power. The second is the booklet. There is interest in having it put on the Town's website; however, it isn't yet in a format that would work well on line. We may also want to consider taking a new look at the booklet in general.
- 6.3 Once we have new members on board, we will need to orient them before turning our attention to a review of the Town's vision statement since it has now been four years since it was adopted.
- 6.4 The VIC will meet next on May 19 and then again on June 16. We will not meet as scheduled on June 2. Jennifer will soon survey members about our plans for the summer.

7. Resignation of the Town's Senior Planner

- 7.1 Paul announced that Tim has submitted his resignation and will be leaving in early June. This is a critical opening and opportunity for Belmont because there is so much going on that Tim is currently involved in or that is related to those activities. There are also two positions opening up on the Planning Board. These changes suggest that the Selectmen take a look at how the Office of Community Development, the planning function, and all related functions are currently structured. Our discussion suggested that they need to give consideration to what the Town's planning function should look like, and prioritize the many skills and competencies that would be of value in this area of Town operations. Next steps with regard to the position will be discussed at next week's Board meeting. In the meantime, Paul asked the Committee to share any thoughts or ideas about these changes with him. Subsequent discussion resulted in these suggestions:

- Take a step back and do a complete assessment of the Office of Community Development and all related functions. Determine the competencies that are needed to cover the many functions that fall under this larger umbrella and do a thorough assessment of the competencies already represented in the department. It might also be useful to determine the plans, interests and strengths of existing staff and consider how those fit in with any changes that might be made.
- The McLean project management must be covered. It is complicated and detailed, and involves enforcement. We need to look at how this will be done. If money will be coming in from McLean, could some of it be used to cover this area of responsibility?
- We need someone who can see both the forest (big picture) and the trees (more nitty gritty and regulatory stuff).
- We need additional help and expertise in this area of Town given how much is going on that is so critical to our future.

8. Adjournment at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Oaklander
Secretary Pro Tem